

Senate

PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY

Exhibit No. 10

Date 4/8/2015

Bill No. HB 245

HB 245

Testimony of Montana Milk Producers Association

(In Opposition)

1. The Montana Milk Producers Association is an association of Montana dairy producers whose members produce milk for sale in Montana.
2. MMPA does not oppose the ability of small farms to produce and consume raw milk.
3. MMPA has serious concerns about the potential impact once the next step is taken – raw milk is sold directly to a consumer.
4. Milk begins to degrade in quality immediately and continues to degrade until it becomes unfit to consume. The rate at which milk degrades depends primarily on temperature—higher temperatures encourage the more rapid growth of the microorganisms which cause the product to degrade.
5. That is why milk produced by MMPA's members is tested every day for bacteria, coliform and somatic cells, to make sure that milk is safe and fit for a consumer to drink. The MMPA's members pay the cost for that testing.
6. Under HB 245 – the small herd exemption exempts permit holders from the licensing, sanitation and quality standards imposed on the MMPA's members, and provides that the raw milk and raw milk products produced by that permit holder be tested "at least four times in separate months during any consecutive six month period." The MMPA's members and other licensed producers should not have to pay the testing costs associated with raw milk producers. Everyone should be required to carry their own costs.
7. MMPA is concerned over the "Pandora's box" that will be unleashed when a consumer has a bad experience with raw milk received from someone operating under a small herd exemption permit. That bad experience, and any resulting publicity generated in the media or, potentially, in the legal system, will negatively impact the milk industry as a whole.
8. Milk competes with other beverages in the marketplace. To compete successfully, the Montana dairy industry must consistently provide the customer a fresh and safe product.
9. HB 245 potentially jeopardizes the reputation and goodwill that has been built up by the Montana milk industry over the years. Given Montana's sparse population, the potential loss of one dissatisfied milk consumer is something to be avoided at all cost.

The Montana Milk Producers Association opposes HB 245. Thank you.